Siuiry into the entire episode and Punish the guilty.

I want to emphasise that this is one of the dubious methods utilised by several public sector undertakings to defraud the public sector and finally bring them into red. For instance, this has happened on a large scale in Vizag Shipyard. Vizag Shipyard which was making a profit to the tune of Rs. 14 crores, this year is showing a loss of Rs. 70 crores enriching the managtrnent-level people, the higher-ups thr- big contractors and the mul-tinational collaboration firms in the

name < f technical cooperation. Instead of blaming the workers, sometimes eiren calling them the most inefficient in the world against which We protest, I reauest that the Govern-ment 0f India should thoroughly in-auire into all these cases of losses and that the Government should also ensure 'Workers' participation in the industry (to as to end the corrupt practices arid enhance the efficiency of industrial management in the public sector.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS I. Rationalisation of newsprint distribution in the country

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT Pnnja): Mr. Vice-Chairman as the Hon 'ble Members of this august House ire aware the issue *of* rationalisation of the distribution of newsprint in the country with a view to removing certain existing lacunae has been under the consideration of the Government for isomel|ime. past. The Government have in this regard considered J*n details various alternatives for evolving a Policy for distribution of new. iprnt in a rational manner. I am happy to inform this august House that toured on these deliberations, tha Government have finalised the Nevs-print Allocation Policy to be applied for the licensing years 1986-87 and 1987-88. 1539 RS-7

The salient features of the policy are:

(i) The Policy is based on the principle of self-reliance. The imported newsprint will supplement the domestic production;

(ii) It is essentially a need-based Policy. Each newspaper will be sup-Plied-newsprint as Per its own requirement based on actual performance. This is consistent with the Government's commitment for promoting the growth of the Press;

(iii) Due to constraints of foreign exchange resources, it had not been possible to service the entire newsprint allocated to the newspapers since 1982-83.- The newspaper industry has been agitating for releasing, the backlog. After a careful consideration, it has been decided that the entire accumulated, backlog of unserviced newsprint from 1982-83 onwards will be "released in a phased manner over a period of 3 years by supply of indigenous newsprint;

(iv> Consistent with the Government's desire to encourage the growth of small and medium newspapers, newspapers with an annual entitlement of upto 300 M.T. will get. their entire requirement in imported variety. However, with a view to encourage the growth of the Press, the practice of requiring a fresh applicant to furnish a bank guarantee has been dispensed with. Also an overall growth rate of 5 per cent has been allowed to accommodate the requirements of fresh applicants and those arising from increase in circulation of existing papers;

(v) As self-reliance is the corner stone of the Government's policy In various fields, it is, therefore imperative that the indigenous industry receives due encouragement. Consistent with this approach, the Policy provides for ensuring that the indigenous newsprint is lifted regularly by the newspapers. To

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achieve this objective under the new Policy, a monitoring system has been introduced; the validity period of authorisation of the allocation of indigenous newsprint has been reduced to 3 months on a uniform basis. Further, it has been provided that if a newspaper fails to lift the indigenous quote of newsprint allotted to it, it will, to that extent, forfeit its entitlement in respect Of the imported newsprint. Similarly, a newspaper which is found to have given a false certificate shout the lifting of the indigenous quota shall be liable to be debarred from getting any further allocation of imported newsprint.

(vi) Lastly, it may be mentioned that it would be the constant endeavour of the Government to make available adequate newsprint to the bonafide users. For this, we solicit the cooperation of the newspaper!! industry. At the same time, it has been considered appropriate to devise certain administrative measures for this purpose. The Policy, therefore, provide that where a newspaper is found to have furnished a. false declaration about its circulation, it may be debarred from allocation of newsprint for a specified period which may extend upto one year.

I am placing a copy of the News print Allocation Policy for the licensing years 1986-87 and 1987-88 on the Table of this august House.

1,00 P.1\L

" THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): Yes, Mr. Aladi Aruna.

SHRI ALADI . ARUNA ALIAS V. ARUNACHALAM (Tamil Nadu). Sir the new (print policy of the Centre is auite unsatisfactory because it has propose' I so many punishments to newspal er which is not responsible for the lapses.

Sir, 1 would like to mention in this House that the small newspapers should be allowed to have imported newspript because the indigenous newsprint is the costliest in the world and it is also very poor in quality. -After Paying the Excise Duty, the cost of the indigenous newsprint is more than Rs. 2.500/-. In this position it is quite impossible for the small weeklies and other journals to have circulation with this newsprint. Therefore, I woud like to tell the honourable Minister that at least to the small newspapers imported newsprint should be supplied' since it is a cheaper newsprint an dthe quality is also a good one.

Then, Sir, in this policy statement, the Government has given time to release the backlog of unserviced news-print from the year 1982-83 onwards. But, at the same time, the Government has imposed a penalty is there is a lapse or failure and it has been mentioned that if a newspaper fails to lift the indigenous quota of news print allotted to it, it will, to that extent, forfeit its entitlement of the im ported newsprint. Sir ,this is the pun-ishment to the newspapers. So I would like to ask whether the Government would come forward to give financial assistance to the papers to lift the backlog of unserviced news-

Plfalt.

Then Sir, we have no differences of opinion regarding self-reliance policy. We appreciate it. But as far as. newsprint policy is concerned, it is related to the freedom of expression. So, We must allow freely as far as possible to import newsprint so as" to increase the number of papers. If you compare the number, every year the number is declining. No newspapers are coming out. Or within two or three they are closed. They realise after two or three years how the industry is a bur-dene'd one &. Therefore, in this matter we must allow more foreign import liberally so as to enable the newspapers to run successfully.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I generally welcome the

Minister's statement which is aimed at rationalising the distribution of newsprint and removing some lacunae which the newsprint industry has been pointing out for a long time. Sir the control over the distribution of newsprint is one of the irritants because through the newsprint policy the Government has been exercising some control over the newspapers and the Press in general, The price of indigenous newsprint has been very high, and as a result most of the newspapers opt for the imported newsprint. And it is, therefore, necessary that the Government should help the newsprint factories to improve their quality, and wherever proposals are pending for improving the newsprint industry they should be cleared as quickly as possible.

I would also like to ask the hon. Minister how many licences for fresh newsprint factories are pending because I know that a number of applications for licences for fresh newsprint irfdustries are still pending, and what are the reasons for the delay.

One more point that I would like *to* stress is that there is no effective machinery with the Registrar of Newspapers to check the circulation figures submitted by the various newspapers and journals. Generally whatever figures are given by the newspapers and journals, they are accepted, as *a* result we find a large number ot un-srupulous publishers indulging in black-marketing in newsprint. I would also like to know whether the Government would consider adopting a policy to penalise some of the yellow journals against which the Press Council has passed, strictures. These magazines-arid journals also have been getting newsprint quotas from the Government and indulging in all sorts of character assassination of individuals and blackmailing tactics. And if the Government exercises some control over that and if it takes the opinion of the Press Council in this matter, (probably some wastage of 'newsprint can be avoided. I would like to know from the Minister whether he would consider this suggestion also.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE (West Bengal): Sir I have a mixed reaction. I do feel happy because of certain provisions in the policy. For instance point (iv) is a very welcome thing. But Sir, I have not understood what is meant exactly by this that it has been decided that the entire accumulated backlog of unserviced news print from 1982-83 onwards will be released in a phased manner over a Period of three years. That is with retrospective effect. Newsprint had already been consumed in whichever manner it was possible. Then why do you provide this? Whatever newsprint was required for 1982-83 and in whichever manner they procured it. that has been, consumed, Now,. why do you provide for this that is a Point on which I seek a clarification.

The second point is this. I welcome this provision that the indigenous newsprint has to be taken as a condition for getting the imported newsprint. I welcome this provision. But he has mentioned about the false ceiv tificates, both on this ground as well as the ground of circulation. It Is only debarring from the supply of newsprint. But my point is that if the *1* owners of newspapers cheat in this manner they have to be penalised, j Apart from the supplies being cur-\ tailed, why are you not providing this kind of provision of prosecuting them under the Criminal Act etc. etc.? That also I want to know. Lastly, Sir, there is an important point which Mr. Alladi Aruna has \ also raised. Sir, the. fact remains that despite all the talk of technology, etc. our newsprint is very costly compared to the imported one. This is a very shameful situation. So, should not the Minister also incidentally explain as to what steps are going to be taken in order to reduce the cost of domestic newsprint?

These are the three points on which I seek clarifications from the hon. Minister.

SHRI NAGEN SAIKIA (Assam): Sir generally speaking I welcome this statement of the Minister to have a policy to have a proper distribution of newsprint in the country. But, at the same time, I think, it should also be assured that this policy would not be applied skillfully sometimes to take political vengeance upon the newspapers subscribing; to some views other than that of the Government. Moreover, I want to know from the Minister whether the Government has any proposal to improve the quality of indigenous newsprint so that it can replace the foreign newsprint in the country. Another point I want to know is whether the Government can take any steps to reduce the price of the indigenous newsprint.

SHRI. LAL K. ADVANI (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman Sir, I would like to go through the text of the policy statement which has been laid on the Table before I make my comments. I would only like- to know simply what has been the involve--ment of the Newspaper Advisory COihmJttee in the formulation of this Policy Statement that you have just made and in the Policy itself. This Newspaper Advisory Committee which includes representatives of the indus try and pressmen had been moribund and it has not been very active. I do not know of the immediate past, but till last year the position was 'hat for a couple of years it has not met. What is the position today? How active is this body? And how far has it been involved in this so-called rationalisa tion of newsprint policy and the policy-framing? If this policy has been the result of deliberations in that News paper Advisory Committee. I would like to know whether these recommen dations have been unanimous or the press representatives have a different view.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: So far as the point which the hon. Member, Mr. Aladi Aruna, who first spoke is concerned, the punishment had to be there. We cannot get rid of the punish-ment. Mr. Nirmal Chatterjee wanted prosecution and Mr. Aladi Aruna said that there should be no punishment. Punishment is there, not actually a punishment as such in a criminal court, but it is to encourage those newspaper owners or the proprietors who make proper utilisation of the imported newsprint. Sir, it transpires and the committee has also deliberated and observed that imported news print for which foreign exchange is being paid, huge sums are being paid, is not being properly utilised and it is only the imported newsprint which is lifted and indigenous is not lifted at all anti thereby all the factories and the industry, the newspaper industry, which is producing this paper, is in great difficulty, and that is why this policy has been made.

Secondly, Sir, the small newspapers were mentioned by Mr. Aladi Aruna. But he probably missed the point ...

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: The reference is to false statements.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: I am now dealing with the points raised by Mr. Aladi Aruna. Afterwards I will come to your points.

So far as the small newspapers are concerned, probably Mr. Aruna did not see sub-paragraph (iv) of the Statement where for the first time in order to give encouragement to small newspapers, of whose difficulties the Government is fully aware of, newspapers with an annual entitlement of up to 300 metric tonnes will get their entire requirement in imported variety. After a study we have found that small newspapers usually are within the user limit of 300 metric tonnes. Therefore, this will be beneficial to them, although it costs foreign exchange. But in order to help them, a sort of a protection to them,, this policy has been made so that this will be available to them so far as the small newspapers are concerned.

Sir, so far as punishment for non-lifting is concerned, Mr. Aladi Aruna did not agree, but as we said, they had to be given and the bar is for only one year. We are aware of a judgment of the Hon. Supreme Court that newspaper-giving being a monopoly cannot be stopped altogether. So, this is a bar so that the people who want to really use it they get their imported quota as allotted to them and ajso use the indigenous. That is why this has been mentioned in the policy.

Sir, Mr. Aruna also stated that there should be more imported newsprint quota because this touches the freedom of expression. We are fully aware of it. Freedom of the press is necessary but along with that we have to see that the industries which are manufacturing the indigenous newsprint we have to look after them, the workers engaged therein and the production that they are making and, therefore, when this much is available this division has been made as far as possible with a rationality, i.e., how much is for imported and how much is for indigenous.

I am grateful to Mr. Upendra for welcoming this policy generally. So far as the question of the number of pending applications is concerned about which a direct question has been asked, these facts are not with us. These figures are with the Registrar of Newspapers. I will obtain these figures and supply them to the Hon. Member.

SHRI VITHALBHAI MOTIRAM PATEL (Gujarat): Sir, the hon. Member has asked for the number of new paper mills.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: He has asked for the number of applications that are pending for registration of news papers.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: I want to know the number of new paper mills and how many applications are pending for that.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: This information regarding the number of applications for opening new paper mills would be with the Industry Minister. I will have to find it out and inform, the Hon. Member.

Sir, to penalise yellow journals, there is in the Statement itself already a provision to "the effect that under five sectors no newsprint are allotted to them at all. This is given in paragraph 3.4 at page 2. These cover journals published primarily to promote sale of goods' or services, (2)' house journals, magazines brought out by undertakings, firms industrial concerns, (3) price lists, catalogues, directories, lotteries, etc (4) racing guides, and. (5) sex magazines. There is a total prohibition for supplying or allotting any newsprint to these categories.

Sir, so far as Mr. Chatterjee's backlog point, first point is concerned this is a backlog regarding imported quota. This imported quota could not be supplied because of constraint of foreign exchange. The newspapers suffer and, therefore, we decided..

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: They have already suffered. Why this additional consideration?

SHRI AJIT PANJA: This demand was made that even if it is indigenous, it may be given and they will be able to utilise it. We considered this factor. That is why this demand was made, and to that, we agreed and so far as demand for imported quota was concerned, we could not because of the constraint.

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: Very recently it was said that foreign exchange position has improved; but it lias actually detailed.

SHRI AJIT PANJA: That is a different point, that is where balance of trade and other things come in. But we are trying to save foreign exchange, wherever possible. Hero we save foreign exchange by less imports

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and. also on the other hand, encourage the indigenous industry, though costly. Though it is costly but industry has to be maintained; workers have to be paid; otherwise, the industry will close down it we import the entire thing, and we lose the foreign exchange ana our own industry sutlers. Ot course, tne point made Dy the hon. Member aoput steps tamen for improving qua-' nty ot indigenous material, has been taicen note ot and it is tor the concerned Ministry and now that this point has been raised. I will bring it . to the notice ot the hon. Minister who is looking after industry.

So far as prosecution is concerned, we do not consider that there should be any prosecution, criminal prosecution as such, because we feel that so far as the press is concerned, we will try to put as much pressure as possible for the purpose of getting the right figures of circulation, but we being the holder of monopoly for supplying newsprint, feel that we hold a better situation than the press, as far as the newsprint is concerned whether it is indigenous or imported, and that is why, to be fair, we have thought of it; we do not want to put punishment as such because in our opinion it will be a double punishment, one that we have the monopoly and the other, we give them punishment also.....

SHRI NIRMAL CHATTERJEE: And the third aspect is, the owners are very big people!

SHRI AJIT PANJA: That is not the third aspect, because there are small newspapers. The owner does not become big on the first day but only when the circulation increases. But that is not the point. But we really consider the position of the Government while it has a monopoly in its own hands ,and that is why one year's debarment was found sufficient.

Mr. Saikia insisted on improvement of quality of the newsprint. So far as the quality part is concerned, as I have stated, this matter has to be taken up by the particular Ministry concerned.

Our very respected hon. Member, Mr. Advani, raised the point of Newspapers Advisory Committee's involvement. They were consulted and in a series of proceedings I find that they were consulted and I find the last meeting was held in March 1986 when certain parameters were laid down after discussing with them. Mr. Advani knows that in this Committee, various people are involved. Of course, all points of everybody could not be taken but we tried, after long deliberations, to strike a golden mean so that it becomes acceptable and after a long time, we have formulated it and now it has been laid on the Table of the House. I have already laid it in the Lok Sabha. I hope the hon. Members will acclaim it, and if there is anything else necessary to improve upon, certainly we have not kept our doors closed. This is for 1986-87 and 1987-88.

II. Oil Discovery at. Namti in Assam

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): Sir, I am glad to announce the discovery of oil at Namti Well No. 1 drilled by ONGC in Assam. The Namti structure measuring an area of about 4 Sq. Kms. is located about 6 Kms. ""South-West of Geleki oil field and 23 Kms. South of Sibsagar Town. During testing, oil flowed at the rate of about 130 barrels per day through a 5mm. bean.

The extent of reserves and potential of the structure would be known after drilling three more exploratory locations, planned during 1987-88.

SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the statement says:

.. .oil flowed at the rate of 130 barrels per day through a 5 mm. bean. - .